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Convocation Address

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EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

Dr. J. R. Howe

In the days when the fierce fires of the French Revolution were spreading consternation and terror throughout Europe and the world, a leader of the French Academy declared "It is a sobering responsibility to be educated men in a day and in a world like this." Something of that same acknowledgment of responsibility and its implied confession of failure must, I believe, rise to expression today in the hearts of thoughtful men and women who have enjoyed the privilege of higher education.

We look out over the frontiers of a world at war today and confess that this tragic thing need not have been. We see the lights going out one by one, as nation after nation of what had been free men are trampled under foot of modern slave-drivers. We see the priceless treasures of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, the high and holy things for which our fathers paid in blood and tears, and which we in our complacency have been taking for granted, ~~we see~~ ^{we see} them now torn from the heritage of whole nations of men in the name of some new order. And we say to ourselves as did that French scholar to his colleagues 150 years ago "It is a sobering responsibility to be educated men in a day and in a world like this."

Certainly no-one speaking for a great university today to those about to receive the degrees of their several accomplishments could in good conscience utter words of easy congratulation or prophesy days of comfort and assured success. In my student ^{generation} ~~graduation~~ in the midst of that first World War President Wm. P. Faunce of Brown University addressing a class of college graduates declared, "You have been born to live and serve in a volcanic age, and there is nothing particularly restful about a volcano. Nevertheless," he continued, "I had rather a thousand times live in a volcanic age than in a glacial one, for a volcanic age is creative." Well surely it is in the midst of a volcanic age that those of you whom your university honors today, come to your commencement and your larger service. And surely it is true today as it

has always been true that in the challenge of volcanic days there rests the opportunity for our largest self-fulfillment as well as for a creative contribution to the better world that ought to be.

In the light of these considerations I make bold to wish for each of you who graduate today no easy tasks, no comfortable security, but those qualities of mind and soul which will bring you to great opportunities and staggering responsibilities as worthy successors to the men who have battled for righteousness and truth in every volcanic age. Three gifts, among others, I covet for you and for the civilization you will help to build, - three gifts of the educated mind to the citizenship of today and tomorrow.

(1) - An Inward Discipline, - a cultivation of character that makes us fit to live with all the comforts and conveniences of our modern day, and able, if need be, to live without them. We are in many ways a soft and coddled generation. We need iron and endurance and the inward strength to meet all the stern demands of war and the even more exacting tasks of peace.

(2) - An Enlightened Patriotism. There is a patriotism gone mad in many countries of the world today. We need a wiser and a saner but a no-less-fervent loyalty to the things for which our country, at her best, has always stood. It does make a difference who wins this war. The destiny of free men for centuries to come is at stake. But it also makes a difference, when the war has been won, what we do about the peace. In 1918 we won the war, but we lost the peace and so we have war again. We need the quality of enlightened patriotism that is equal not only to the tragic demands of war but also to the monotonous and "hum-drum" but equally important demands of peace.

(3) - A World Perspective. We need for the world of the future a new "declaration of interdependence." With our shrunken distances and our multiplied communications no nation can ever live unto itself again. It behooves us who have shared some measure of educated thinking to pioneer in bringing to mankind a reasonable and

practical design for world living which shall not sacrifice the values of national life and culture but which shall give to all races the stimulation and the security of a just and cooperative international order and to all the sons of men the blessings of peace and a fair chance once more at the privilege_s of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.